image
1
JOINES · KOTZ · RILEY · PRITCHETT
Krampus!

The History of the

Krampus!

In the final days of the 17th Century, Sinterklaas, the first Santa, found himself overwhelmed by children desiring gifts on the eve before Christmas. A review of these children revealed a significant portion undeserving of gifts, due to behavior later coined anti-social.
In an effort to cull these undesirables from the annual ceremonies, Sinterklaas turned to forbidden, darker magicks and brought forth a creature born of the shadows.

That creature was the Krampus.

For nearly three centuries, the Krampus assisted Sinterklaas and others across Europe, bringing terror and punishment to wicked children each Christmas Eve. But as the years passed and attitudes changed, the decision was made to do away with the punishment component of the holiday. The Krampus, however, refused to change, choosing to independently continue his work each year. Finally, the 1950s saw the Krampus captured by Sinterklaas and detained in a special prison at the North Pole. He remains there to this day, never to set cloven foot among humankind again.

Unless, of course, something changes...

written by **BRIAN JOINES**

illustrated by **DEAN KOTZ**

colors by **RON RILEY**

letters by **CHARLES PRITCHETT**

image

IMAGE COMICS, INC.
Robert Kirkman - Chief Operating Officer
Erik Larsen - Chief Financial Officer
Todd McFarlane - President
Marc Silvestri - Chief Executive Officer
Jim Valentino - Vice-President

Eric Stephenson - Publisher
Ron Richards - Director of Business Development
Jennifer de Guzman - Director of Trade Book Sales
Kat Salazar - PR & Marketing Coordinator
Jeremy Sullivan - Digital Marketing Coordinator
Jamie Parreno - Online Marketing Coordinator
Emilio Bautista - Sales Assistant
Branwyn Bigglestone - Senior Accounts Manager
Emily Miller - Accounts Manager
Jeanie Dudas - Administrative Assistant
Tyler Shainline - Events Coordinator
David Brothers - Content Manager
Jonathan Chan - Production Manager
Drew Gill - Art Director
Meredith Wallace - Print Manager
Monica Garcia - Senior Production Artist
Jenna Savage - Production Artist
Addison Duke - Production Artist
IMAGECOMICS.COM

KRAMPUS. Issue 1. December 2013. Published by Image Comics, Inc. Office of publication: 2001 Center Street, 6th Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704.

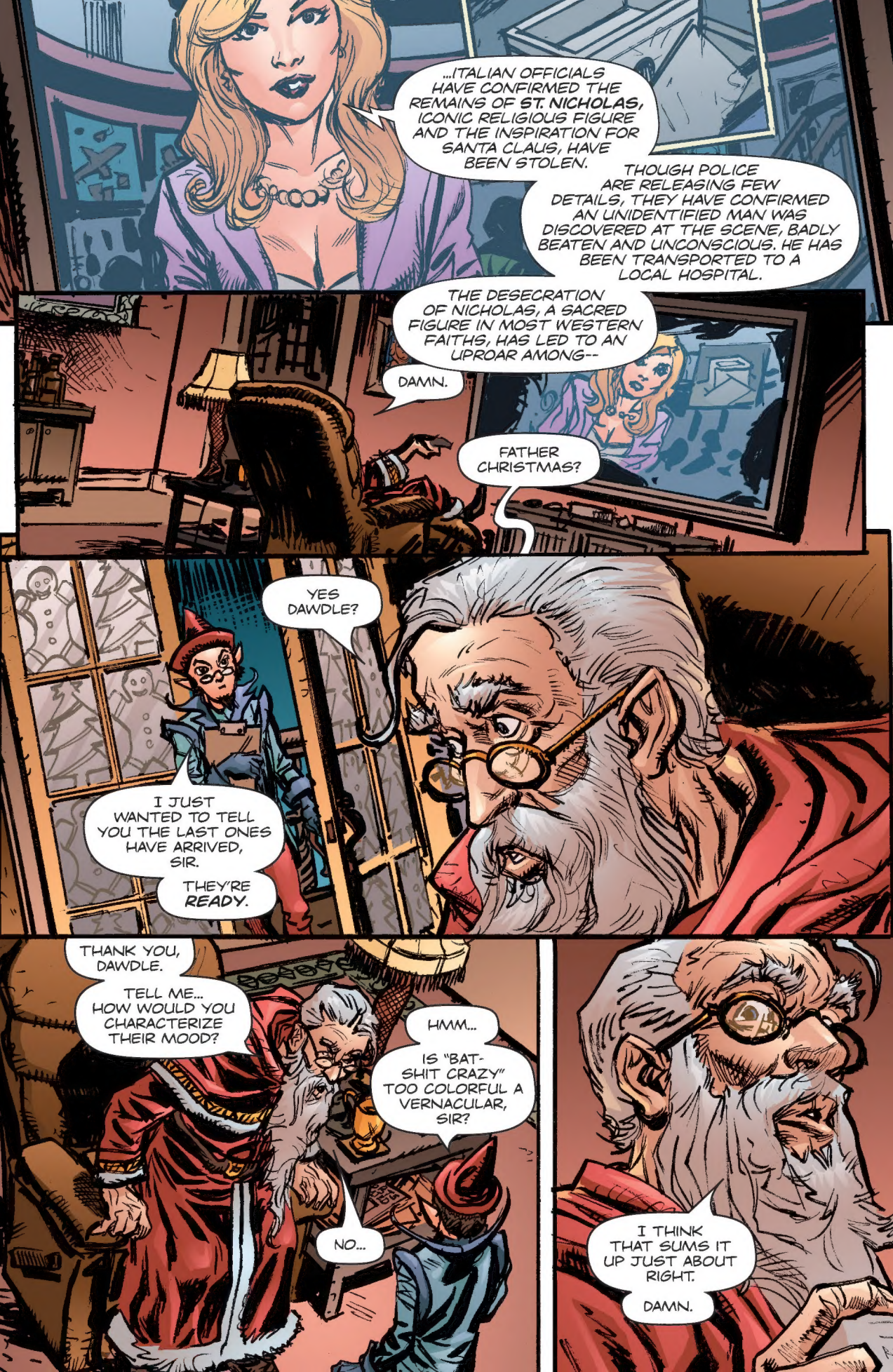
Copyright © 2013 Brian Joines & Dean Kotz. All rights reserved. Krampus™ (including all prominent characters featured herein), its logo and all character likenesses are trademarks of Brian Joines & Dean Kotz, unless otherwise noted. Image Comics® and its logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means (except for short excerpts for review purposes) without the express written permission of Image Comics, Inc. All names, characters, events and locales in this publication are entirely fictional. Any resemblance to actual persons (living or dead), events or places, without satiric intent, is coincidental. DIGITAL EDITION.

Bari, Italy.
BELSNICKEL!
BELSNICKEL!
YES, YES, YES...
...I AM HERE.
YOU ARE LATE. AND GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES...
I AM TWO MINUTES LATE. NOT ALL OF US CAN CIRCLE THE GLOBE IN A SINGLE NIGHT.
NOT THAT ANY OF YOU ACTUALLY DO THAT...
NOW, LEAVE ME ALONE SO THAT I MAY DO MY JOB...
...YOU HOLLY JOLLY MOTHER FUAAH!
AAAGGHH!
POOR BELSNICKEL... EVER AT HIS MASTERS' BECK AND CALL.
LABORING UNDER THE SAD HOPE THAT ONE DAY THEY'LL THINK YOU WORTHY ENOUGH TO STAND AMONG THEM.
WHO DARES TO--?
YOU.

SUGAR PLUM FAIRIES!
GET AWAY FROM THE CASKET, YOU CONFECTIONOUS VERMIN! THE CONTENTS--
YOU GET ONE CHANCE, HO-HO-HOBO. STAY OUT OF OUR WAY AND YOU'LL GET TO LEAVE IN ONE MANGY, MOTH-BITTEN PIECE.
OTHERWISE...
YOU THINK YOU CAN INTIMIDATE ME? I KILL YOUR KIND AND EAT THEM FOR JUNK FOOD.
YOU TASTE LIKE SWEET-AND-SOUR CHICKEN.
NOW MOVE AWAY!
IGNORE HIM! PUT YOUR WINGS INTO IT!
I WAS SO HOPING YOU'D PUT UP A FIGHT, BELSNICKEL. NOW WE GET TO HAVE FUN.
SUGAR PLUMS...

ATTACK!
THAT'S IT! THAT'S IT! KEEP PUSHING!
WE GOT IT!
GAH! GROSS! HE'S ALL ROTTY AND STUFF!
IT'S A COFFIN. WHAT WERE YOU EXPECTING, AN OFF-RAMP TO NARNIA OR SOMETHING?
GET WORD TO THE BOSS THAT WE'VE SECURED THE ITEM AND ARE READY TO MOVE TO PHASE TWO.
BY THIS TIME TOMORROW EVENING...

...ALL THE SPIRIT IN THE WORLD WON'T BE ABLE TO STOP US.


...ITALIAN OFFICIALS HAVE CONFIRMED THE REMAINS OF ST. NICHOLAS, ICONIC RELIGIOUS FIGURE AND THE INSPIRATION FOR SANTA CLAUS, HAVE BEEN STOLEN.
THOUGH POLICE ARE RELEASING FEW DETAILS, THEY HAVE CONFIRMED AN UNIDENTIFIED MAN WAS DISCOVERED AT THE SCENE, BADLY BEATEN AND UNCONSCIOUS. HE HAS BEEN TRANSPORTED TO A LOCAL HOSPITAL.
THE DESECRATION OF NICHOLAS, A SACRED FIGURE IN MOST WESTERN FAITHS, HAS LED TO AN UPROAR AMONG--
DAMN.
FATHER CHRISTMAS?
YES DAWDLE?
I JUST WANTED TO TELL YOU THE LAST ONES HAVE ARRIVED, SIR.
THEY'RE READY.
THANK YOU, DAWDLE.
TELL ME... HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THEIR MOOD?
HMM...
IS "BAT-SHIT CRAZY" TOO COLORFUL A VERNACULAR, SIR?
NO...
I THINK THAT SUMS IT UP JUST ABOUT RIGHT.
DAMN.

GENTLEMEN! I SHARE YOUR DISTRESS OVER THE SITUATION BUT PANIC AND IRRATIONALITY ARE NOT THE ANSWERS!
NOW, IF EVERYONE HAS CALMED, I OFFICIALLY CALL TO ORDER THIS EMERGENCY SESSION OF THE...
Secret Society of Santa Clauses!
THIS IS THE END OF DAYS! THE SANTAS SHALL BE NO MORE!
UGH. AGAIN WITH THE END OF DAYS...

OH, LOOK... SINTERKLAAS HAS AN OPINION.
WHAT A SURPRISE.
REST ASSURED THIS IS NOT "THE END OF DAYS." IT IS A TEMPORARY SETBACK, NOTHING MORE. WE'LL--
LIES AND DECEIT!
NONE OF YOU SUCKLINGS KNOW WHAT THOSE BONES REPRESENT! I WAS THE FIRST SANTA! I WAS THERE!
THAT SKELETON FUELS OUR ABILITIES! IF THE MAGIC IS TAMPERED WITH IN ANY WAY WE'LL BE POWERLESS!
NONSENSE. CLEARLY WE COULD ONLY HAVE TRAVELLED THIS DISTANCE THROUGH MAGICAL MEANS.
I PROPOSE A TEST. BABA CHAGHALOO?
YES, MOS CRACIUN?
ONE OF OUR PRIMARY ABILITIES AS SANTAS IS SCRAMBLING UP A CHIMNEY. I'M CERTAIN THERE'LL BE NO ISSUES ACCOMPLISHING THIS SIMPLE TASK.
BABA?
UMMM... ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS, MOS?
TRUST ME, MY FRIEND. NO HARM WILL COME TO YOU.
VERY WELL.

WELL.
IT WOULD APPEAR I AM MISTAKEN.
AAHHH!
"MISTAKEN"?! WE ARE AT THE NORTH POLE!
YOU MEAN WE'RE TRAPPED UP HERE? WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO? WHAT ARE WE GONNA EAT?!
OH, GUESS WHAT, EVERYONE! KRINGLE'S CONCERNED ABOUT FOOD!
I SWEAR, AMERICAN, YOU ARE ONE STEP AWAY FROM FILLING STOCKINGS WITH TYPE TWO DIABETES.
SANTAS, PLEASE! I KNOW THIS NEWS IS DIRE BUT WE MUST MAINTAIN LEVEL HEADS! IF WE ARE TO--
DID DAIDI NA NOLLAIG JUST THROW HIMSELF INTO THE FIREPLACE AS WELL?
SOME PEOPLE JUST NEED TO SEE THINGS FOR THEMSELVES, SIR.
WHERE ARE THE REINDEER? LET US HARNESS THE REINDEER AND FLY BACK TO CIVILIZATION!
UMMM...

AWWWP.
SO...
I THINK WE'RE GOING TO NEED A NEW BLITZEN.
THE REINDEER... THEY ARE TIED TO OUR MAGIC...
WE'RE DOOMED.
NO.
NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO SUCCUMB TO FEAR. NOW IS THE TIME TO FIGHT!
YES, WE ARE A COLLECTION OF OLD MEN-- OLD MEN BELIEVED BY THE WORLD AT LARGE TO BE IMAGINARY. BUT WE HAVE OPTIONS.
THE ELVES CAN BEGIN CONSTRUCTION ON A VEHICLE TO TAKE US ACROSS THE ARCTIC TUNDRA.
AND IN THE INTERIM...
...THERE ARE OTHER KINDS OF MAGIC.

I'LL SAY IT AGAIN, SINCE YOU DON'T SEEM TO BE GETTING THE MESSAGE...
THIS IS A MISTAKE.
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS CREATURE'S LIKE! THERE'S A REASON HE'S BEEN IMPRISONED FOR SIXTY YEARS!
I KNOW! I WAS THE FIRST SANTA! I WORKED WITH THE--
I KNOW YOU WERE THE FIRST SANTA-- HOW COULD I NOT-- AND YOUR OBJECTIONS ARE NOTED.
AS ARE THOSE BY, WELL, EVERY SANTA FROM EASTERN EUROPE.
HE OPERATED IN OUR TERRITORIES! YOU NEVER HAD TO DEAL WITH HIM IN YOUR PRECIOUS ENGLAND!
WHEN THE DECISION WAS MADE TO CEASE PUNISHING WICKED CHILDREN, WE GAVE HIM THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONTINUE WORKING WITH US, JUST AS WE DID FOR BELSNICKEL.
YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED THEN AND YOU KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN NOW.
I'M AWARE OF THE HISTORY...
WHICH IS WHY WE'RE TAKING PRECAUTIONS. HOTEIOSHO?
TAKING INTO ACCOUNT HIS PENCHANT FOR... DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR, WE HAVE A CONTINGENCY IN PLACE. I HAVE DEVELOPED A SPECIALIZED--
UH, FELLAS? I DON'T MEAN TO INTERRUPT...

...BUT WE'RE HERE.
HUZZAH.
HELLO? ARE YOU THERE?
I REALIZE IT'S BEEN AGES SINCE WE'VE SPOKEN WITH YOU AND, GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THERE'S A CRUEL IRONY INVOLVED...
...BUT WE FIND OURSELVES IN NEED OF YOUR HELP.
THE REMAINS OF SAINT NICHOLAS HAVE BEEN STOLEN AND, WITHOUT THEM, THE SOCIETY IS... HELPLESS.
SOMEONE MUST JOURNEY SOUTH, RECOVER THE BONES AND RESTORE OUR POWER. OF EVERYONE AT THE NORTH POLE, YOU ARE THE ONLY VIABLE CANDIDATE.
WELL, KRAMPUS. WHAT DO YOU SAY?
WHAT DO I SAY?

I SAY GO [illegible] YOURSELVES.

I REALIZE IT'S A GREAT DEAL TO ASK, BUT I BEG YOU TO RECONSIDER! THIS--
CEASE YOUR INSIPID PRATTLING, CHRISTMAS!
WHY SHOULD I CARE WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR PRECIOUS SANTAS, GIVEN MY TREATMENT AT YOUR HANDS?
YOU SHALL ALL PERISH WHEN KRINGLE FINALLY CONSUMES YOU IN A CANNIBALISTIC RAGE.
NOW LEAVE ME! I WISH TO WATCH MY STORIES IN PEACE.
I FIND ZIS DOWAGER COUNTESS TO BE MOST AMUSING.
KRAMPUS, PLEASE. WHOEVER DID THIS ALSO ATTACKED BELSNICKEL. HE'S IN A COMA.
YOU AND HE WERE HOALOHA. MAYBE YOU--
BELSNICKEL?
DO NOT THROW ZAT NAME IN FRONT OF MY FACE TO SWAY MY OPINIONS!
YOU SANTAS TURNED HIM INTO A LAPDOG, WHINING AT THE TABLE FOR SCRAPS. BELSNICKEL IS DEAD TO ME.
AS ARE ALL OF YOU.
VERY WELL, KRAMPUS. YOU WIN-- WE HAVE NO OTHER OPTIONS.
IF YOU AGREE TO HELP US, WE WILL GRANT YOU WHAT YOU'VE BEEN DENIED THIS ENTIRE TIME.
YOUR FREEDOM.

ARE YOU MAD?! YOU CANNOT FREE--
SHUT UP, SINTERKLAAS!
HERE IS MY OFFER, KRAMPUS: YOU WORK FOR US. IF YOU FALL BACK TO YOUR PREVIOUS WAYS, OUR AGREEMENT IS VOIDED. IF YOU FAIL, OUR AGREEMENT IS VOIDED.
BUT, IF YOU SUCCEED, YOU MAY REMAIN IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD, LIVE WHATEVER KIND OF LIFE YOU DESIRE, AND WILL NEVER HAVE TO DEAL WITH ANY OF US AGAIN.
SUPPOSE... SUPPOSE I AM INTERESTED. WHAT IS TO PREVENT YOU FROM BREAKING YOUR PROMISE, TRACKING ME DOWN ONCE I HAVE RECOVERED ZEE BONES?
AND DO NOT TELL ME IT IS YOUR WORD AS A SANTA... YOU KNOW ZAT CARRIES LITTLE CURRENCY WITH ME.
I UNDERSTAND, WHICH IS WHY I MAKE A PLEDGE ON THE HOLIEST OF THE SANTA TOMES...
THE LIST OF NICE.
ZEE SACRED TEXTS!
VERY WELL, CHRISTMAS. I... BELIEVE YOU. WE HAVE A DEAL.
NOW OPEN THE DOOR SO ZAT I MAY BEGIN.
READY?
READY.
NOW.

WHAT ZEE--
WHAT ZEE HELL IS ZIS?!
IT'S CALLED THE NAUGHTY BOMB.
IT MONITORS THE LEVELS OF NAUGHTY AND NICE IN A PERSON'S SYSTEM. IF THE NAUGHTY LEVELS GET TOO HIGH... BOOM.
ANY DEVIATION... PUNISHING WICKED CHILDREN, ABANDONING THE MISSION, GENERAL DEVIANT BEHAVIOR... WILL BE VIEWED AS VERY NAUGHTY.
LEAVE IT TO ZEE JAPANESE GUY TO COME ZROUGH WITH ZEE TECH SIDE OF ZINGS.
I AM IMPRESSED, CHRISTMAS. ZEE IDOL OF CHILDREN THE WORLD OVER WILLING TO MURDER BY REMOTE CONTROL?
IT BRINGS JOY TO MY BLACKENED HEART.
SAVE YOUR DELIGHT FOR ANOTHER DAY, KRAMPUS. NOW COME...
...THERE IS ONE CREATURE HERE WHO WILL BE GENUINELY HAPPY TO SEE YOU.

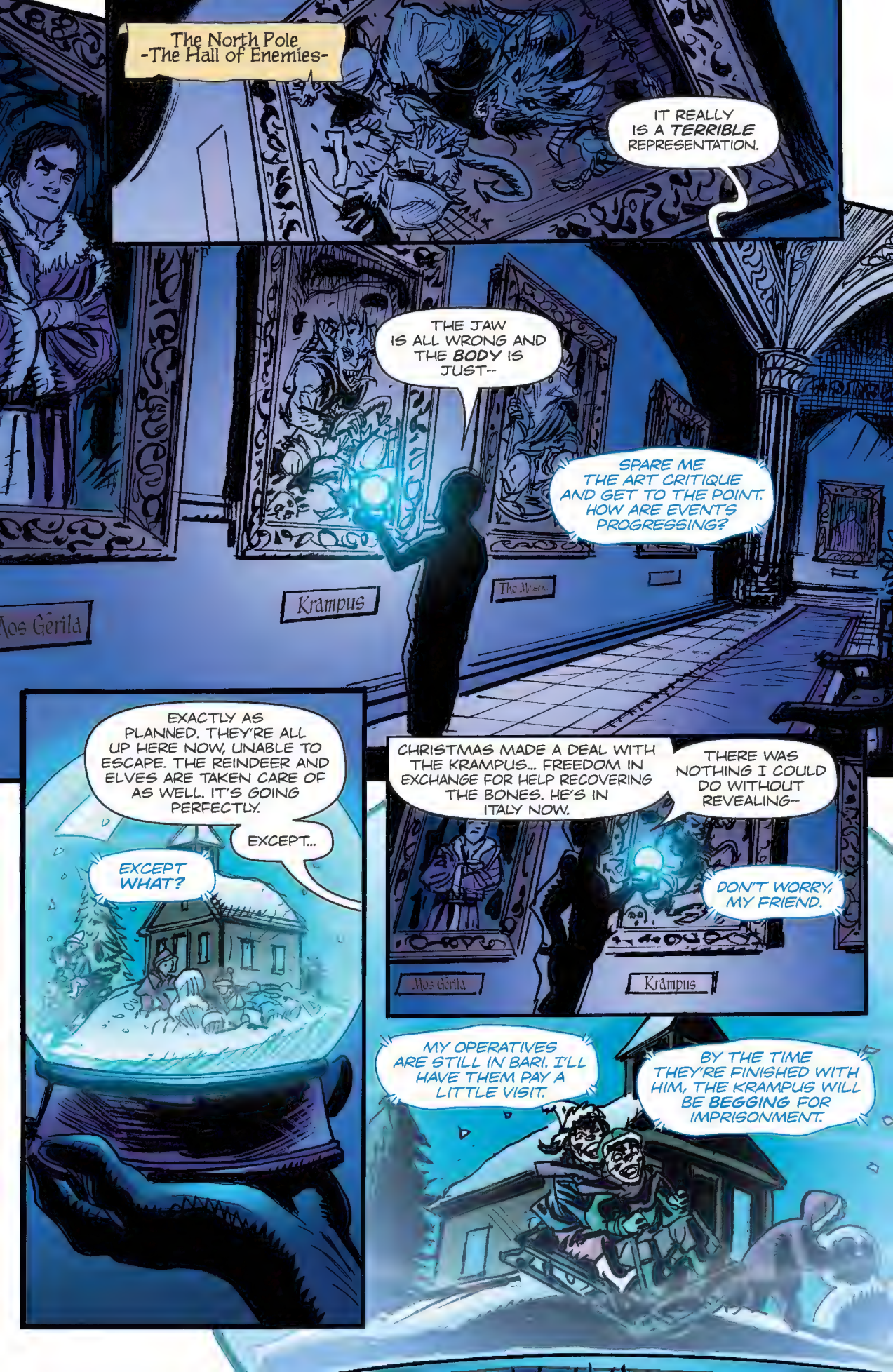
STUTGAARD!
MY LUPINE STEED!
I CANNOT BELIEVE YOU KEPT HIM! I'D HAVE ZOUGHT YOU'D PUT HIM DOWN LONG AGO!
WE'RE NOT MONSTERS, KRAMPUS. AND HE CAME IN HANDY CLEANING UP THE ODD REINDEER FATALITY.
THIS WILL GIVE YOU A DIRECT LINE TO US. USE IT WHEN YOU'VE FOUND SOMETHING.
AND THIS CONTAINS THE LOCATION OF BELSNICKEL'S HOSPITAL ROOM.
I ZOUGHT YOU SAID HE WAS COMATOSE.
BELSNICKEL HEARD OF AN ATTEMPT ON THE SKELETON WEEKS AGO. I DIDN'T TELL THE OTHERS BECAUSE, WELL, THEY'RE A PANICKY LOT.
THE INFORMATION HE UNCOVERED MAY PROVE CRITICAL TO THE INVESTIGATION, BUT I CAN'T FIND IT.
THE HOSPITAL COULD PROVIDE THE ANSWER.
GOOD LUCK, KRAMPUS, AND BE CAREFUL.
SAVE YOUR CONCERN FOR ZEE WORLD, FATHER CHRISTMAS...

...FOR ZEE KRAMPUS IS BACK!
HAHA HAHAHA HAHA
YOU'RE A DAMNED FOOL, FATHER CHRISTMAS... YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IT IS YOU'VE DONE.
EVEN THE GREATEST EVILS BECOME NECESSARY IN THE PROPER CIRCUMSTANCES, SINTERKLAAS.
UNTIL THE ELVES COMPLETE CONSTRUCTION OF A TRANSPORT VEHICLE, THE KRAMPUS IS OUR BEST HOPE.
AND IF HE WAVERS, YOU KNOW WE HAVE CONTINGENCIES TO PREVENT HIM FR--
FATHER CHRISTMAS! FATHER CHRISTMAS!
AGIOS VASSILIS?
YOU MUST COME QUICKLY, FATHER CHRISTMAS!
IT'S THE ELVES.

"SOMETHING IS HAPPENING TO THE ELVES!"
DOES ANYONE KNOW HOW TO LOAD A FRIGGING APP ON THIS THING?!
AAAAHHH! HOT HOT HOT!
FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, CAN I JUST CARVE A WOODEN DUCK? IS THAT TOO MUCH TO ASK?!
WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
IT MEANS, KANAKALOKA, THAT THE MAGIC SEEMS TO HAVE ALLOWED THE ELVES TO KEEP UP ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF TECHNOLOGY. WITHOUT IT...
...THEY'RE GETTING DUMBER.
AND IF THAT'S THE CASE...

"...THEN THE KRAMPUS IS OUR ONLY HOPE."
QUIET, STUTGAARD!
AARRROOOOO!
WELL, WELL, WELL...GUTEN TAG, BELSNICKEL.
I CAN HONESTLY SAY ZAT YOU HAVE NEVER LOOKED BETTER.
PERHAPS NOW YOU WISH YOU'D SIDED WITH ME AGAINST ZOSE FAT--
SNIFF SNIFF
AAAGHH! SUGAR PLUM FAIRIES! SO SICKLY SWEET!
IT WOULD SEEM ZEE TINY GOSSAMER DEVILS ARE INVOLVED IN SOME FASHION.
PERHAPS HIS PERSONAL EFFECTS WILL REVEAL SOME-- EMPTY?!
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO FIND ANYTHING WITHOUT--
<STOP IT, PAOLO!>
HMMM?

‹OH, POOR ROSA, ABOUT TO CRY! YOU GOING TO GO HOME AND TELL MAMA ABOUT IT, YOU LITTLE CRYBABY?›
LOOK AT HIM! BUBBLING OVER WITH NAUGHTINESS. SO DELICIOUSLY WICKED...
HIS PUNISHMENT SHALL BE MY GREATEST--
NAUGHTY BOMB ARMED.
AAAHH! I TAKE IT BACK! I TAKE IT BACK! LOOK, I HAVE MOVED AWAY FROM ZEE DOOR!
HE WANTS TO TORTURE ZEE GIRL? WHO CARES? NOT ZIS GUY!
NAUGHTY BOMB DISARMED.
⊰HUFF⊱ ⊰HUFF⊱ ⊰HUFF⊱ GOT TO HAND IT TO ZEE SANTAS... WHEN IT COMES TO MURDER ZEY DEFINITELY BRING ZEIR 'A' GAME--
WAIT A MINUTE.
PATIENT: BELMONT SNICKOLAS [JYG1138]
CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF MEDICAL CARE
HEALTH RECORD
DATE
SYMPTOMS, DIAGNOSIS, TREATMENT, TREATING ORGANIZATION
"BELMONT SNICKOLAS"?
WHO ZEE HELL IS BELMONT SNICKOLAS?


The North Pole
-The Hall of Enemies-
IT REALLY IS A TERRIBLE REPRESENTATION.
THE JAW IS ALL WRONG AND THE BODY IS JUST--
SPARE ME THE ART CRITIQUE AND GET TO THE POINT. HOW ARE EVENTS PROGRESSING?
Krampus
EXACTLY AS PLANNED. THEY'RE ALL UP HERE NOW, UNABLE TO ESCAPE. THE REINDEER AND ELVES ARE TAKEN CARE OF AS WELL. IT'S GOING PERFECTLY.
EXCEPT...
EXCEPT WHAT?
CHRISTMAS MADE A DEAL WITH THE KRAMPUS... FREEDOM IN EXCHANGE FOR HELP RECOVERING THE BONES. HE'S IN ITALY NOW.
THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO WITHOUT REVEALING--
DON'T WORRY, MY FRIEND.
Krampus
MY OPERATIVES ARE STILL IN BARI. I'LL HAVE THEM PAY A LITTLE VISIT.
BY THE TIME THEY'RE FINISHED WITH HIM, THE KRAMPUS WILL BE BEGGING FOR IMPRISONMENT.

Bari, Italy.
"ARE YOU CERTAIN ZIS IS ZEE PLACE?"
BELSNICKEL WAS NEVER A BASTION OF CLEANLINESS, BUT ZIS FEELS A BIT TOO LOW-RENT EVEN FOR HIM.
THAT MUST BE THE PROPER LOCATION.
I AM CONCERNED I WILL BE REQUIRING A TETANUS SHOT ONCE MY WORK HERE IS COMPLETE.
ACCORDING TO HOTEIOSHO'S RESEARCH, THE NAME BELMONT SNICKOLAS ONLY APPEARS ONE PLACE IN THE ENTIRE WORLD...
...A CHECKING ACCOUNT USED TO PAY MONTHLY FEES TO THAT STORAGE FACILITY.
YOU ARE LUCKY, KRAMPUS, THAT WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO KEEP THE ELVES OUT OF THE WI-FI THUS FAR.
I AM GIDDY WITH DELIGHT.
SO, HOTEIOSHO, CAN YOUR PRECIOUS INTERNET TELL ME WHICH OF ZESE UNITS BELONGED TO--
NEVER MIND.
IT SEEMS I HAVE FOUND IT.

WELL, KRAMPUS? WHAT DO YOU SEE?
I-- ONE MOMENT, CHRISTMAS.
I JUST NEED A MOMENT.
_A_P__I__HD___
HEADLESS BODY IN TOPLESS BAR
Mansion of death yields 39 bodies
THE RED PONY
ZEE ROOM IS FILLED WITH MAPS AND PHOTOGRAPHS AND CLIPPINGS FROM ACROSS ZEE GLOBE, STRUNG TOGETHER IN A MAD TAPESTRY.
I CAN MAKE NEITHER HEADS NOR TAILS OF IT, BUT WHATEVER BELSNICKEL WAS LOOKING INTO, HE BELIEVED IT TO BE BIG.
XYZ? 1942?
Q: CAN HE FLY? A: FLY TO MHEKEZ?
BELSNICKEL, YOU IMBECILE...

...WHAT HAVE YOU GOTTEN ME INTO?
TO BE CONTINUED...

Welcome to the first issue of KRAMPUS! *If you're the type who reads these pieces after the book, I hope you enjoyed it and will come back for more. If you're the type who skips these pieces, why the hell am I wasting my time on this?*

The book in your hand (or on your tablet, for all you 21st-century Jetsons types) has been a long time coming. I've always had a slightly darker sense of humor and an appreciation for exploring the underbelly of "innocent" childhood standards, to try and muddy up these components widely considered so pure and, more often that not, overly saccharine. So you can imagine my excitement when I first heard of a demonic counterpart to Santa Claus who punished wicked children. You wanna talk about a Christmas gift? THAT was a Christmas gift! Now all I had to do was figure out how to use it.

Fortunately, my awareness of Krampus came after my first attempt at a Christmas-centric comic, some nine or ten years ago. It was never released, thank god (it was terrible), but everything remotely interesting I created for it is owned by the publisher. Sadly, Krampus will never tangle with sinister elf Felix Navidad or contend with the Ninjabread Men (which, I just learned this week, is suddenly a thing at Target. So…you're welcome, Target?); they're lost to the annals of work-for-hire.

This is also not my first go at an Image book. Over the years, a number of books I pitched were approved, with topics ranging from comedic corporate superheroes to spies in outer space to a relaunch of another creator's established property. Each time I went in swinging, but something reared up and stopped me cold: an artist more interested in playing Xbox, a creator not fully committed to seeing their property return to the shelves, or even my own insecurities and bad habits. Regardless, to finally have a book on the shelves, with the Krampus as star, partnered with this creative team…like I said, it's been a long time coming. But I feel it was worth the wait.

I have a lot of people to thank for getting me here, but I need to start with Dean Kotz, my partner in crime, who is producing amazing work and has definitely given our version of Krampus a life of his own. Dean has been working on another book (Black Coat from Ape Entertainment) while working on KRAMPUS! and has moved twice during this time, so for him to be generating work like he is during all of that? Phenomenal. Obvious thanks also goes to colorist Ron Riley and letterer Charles Pritchett, the other members of our team. If you enjoyed the book, that's due to the complete package, and Ron and Charles are a part of that. Plus, nobody wants to see me coloring or lettering.

Huge thanks to Jay Faerber, a great friend and my unofficial "comics guru" who has and continues to guide me through the choppy waters of the industry. Thanks to Image folks Eric Stephenson, Jim Valentino, Robert Kirkman, creators Brian Vaughan, John Layman, and Jade Dodge for their continued championing of me and this project. Thanks to my friends and family for their constant support and big thanks to Eastern Europe for coming up with an insane Christmas demon myth.

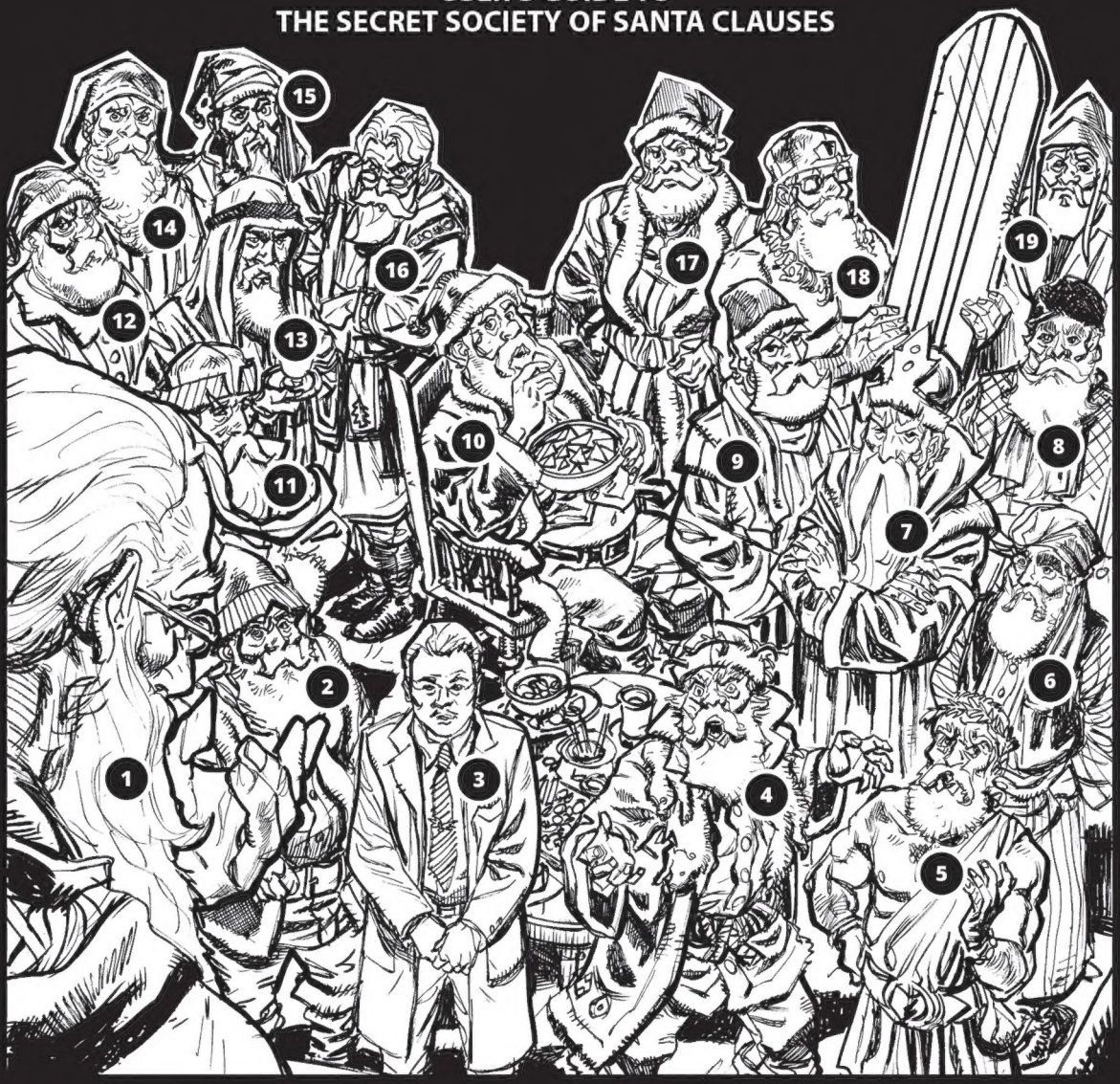
Finally, I'd like to dedicate this book to my cousin Lisa Whiting-Spalvins, who passed away a little over a year ago. Lisa was one of my closest friends and was taken far too young. I suspect she would've liked this book and, even if she didn't, would've supported the hell out of it. I don't subscribe to a particular faith but, hopefully, she still is anyway.

And that brings us back to "doe". If you enjoyed the book, you may want to check out my other project, IMAGINE AGENTS, currently being published by BOOM! Studios. And if you're down for doling out some feedback, feel free to send compliments, criticisms, what have you to us at krampusletters@gmail.com.

Thanks for reading and see you in 30!

Brian Joines
11/13/13

USER'S GUIDE TO THE SECRET SOCIETY OF SANTA CLAUSES



1. Father Christmas.....United Kingdom
2. Weihnachtsmann.....Germany
3. Hoteiosho.....Japan
4. Sinterklaas.....Netherlands
5. Agios Vassilis.....Greece
6. Baba Chaghaloo .....Afghanistan
7. Mos Craciun.....Romania
8. Ded Moroz.....Russia
9. Kaghand Papik.....Armenia
10. Kris Kringle.....United States
11. Dun Che Lao Ren.....China
12. Papa Noel.....Spain
13. Vader Kersfees.....Iraq
14. Joulupukki.....Finland
15. Daidi Na Nollaig .....Ireland
16. Pere Noel.....France
17. Karacsony Apo.....Hungary
18. Kanakaloka.....Pacific Islands
19. Babbo Natale.....Italy